

A SECURE
AND
PRUDENT
CHOICE

of Beliefe.

Written by a Student in Divinity.



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NOTHING in this world doth more import a Man for his good, both temporall and eternall, then the professiō of a true Religion. What more confessed amongst Christians not infected with Atheisme? yet such is our poore Condition, that nothing ordinarily is lesse valued: many stubbornly retayning what they haue been taught from their youth; Others embracing what is most commō where they liue; Others indifferent, meerely Animals, their wits seruing them no further then how to haue good dayes; Others, loath to take paines, least thereby their Conscience be moued to Crosse their couetous appetites; Others, with a kind of frenzy, perswa-

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ding themselves of I know not what Ghost: Others, lurking vnder affected & willfull ignorance, perswaded they are vncapable of their right leuell in these troubled waters: Multitudes finally, apprehending little difference in points of Religion, sleepe securely vpon any pillow. Many of these, though of different beleifes, flatter themselves with hope of saluation, when they haue little reason to be secure thereof; as it will appeare by the infallible rule of a *Secure Choice* I will propose in this ensuing Discourse: For which purpose.

1. I suppose first, that our Blessed Sauour, when he was to depart in visible presence from this world, his last care was to leaue his Church prouided with such as should sufficiētly gouerne, teach, and augment it after him, to whom & their Successors for that purpose he promised his especiall assistance and protection to the end of the world: *As my Father hath sent me, so I send you. Io. 20. 21. Going into the whole World, preach the Gospell. Marke 16. Heere we see*

see the Apostles Commission, not only to go as being sent, but also to send others their Successours with the like authority to be successiueley deliuered. That also he left ample power for the perfect gouernmēt of the same Church, besides these places, that of *S. Matth. 28.* deserueth speciall Consideration: *All power is giuen me in heauen, and in earth; going therefore, teach all Nations.* Where that illation, *Going therefore*, implieth a most ample authority: for hauing said all power is giuen me, he presently practizeth and giueth the like, saying *going therefore*. Moreouer that we may know nothing should be wāting to the perpetuall gouernment of this his Church, and that iustly it may be esteemed to be directed, not so much by humane wit or industry, as by the spirit of God; he promised *Io. 14. And I will pray my Father, and he will giue you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for euer, the Spirit of truth.*

2. It cannot be denied, but these places enforce an eminent, perpetuall,

and infallible Authority of Christes Church, to which such ample power is giuen, & where the spirit of truth is promised to reside. Yet because meanes are found to delude the force of them (as of any others there may be) I insist not vpon them, but for the present only make this *Dilemma*: Either these Texts are cleerly to be vnderstood as they lye, or not: if they are; then there hath euer beene a perpetuall, absolute, and infallible power of gouernemēt in the Church of Christ established. If not, this only I will gather, as out of other Texts it may be, that scarce any can be produced so cleere for the prooffe of any verity, which may not maliciously be wrested to a strange sense, by tongues sounding nothing more sacredly then Scripture. Thus all Sectaries, though contrary amongst themselues, auouch for their vndoubted warrant, Holy Scripture, some vnderstanding it in one sense, others in an other: when indeed the prooffe is not out of Scripture, but out of their owne priuate iudgment.

iudgment. Who then doth not see, how vainely Scripture only, is pretended for warrant of their contrary inuentions; and how hard it is to conuince the truth by it alone? not for that it containeth not all truth, and all sufficient instruction for saluation, but because following our owne priuate iudgment we may erre in the sense therof. Since therefore no man, though of neuer so entire iudgment, can sufficiently shew his owne sense to be true and the contrary false, as it appeareth by such monstrous Contradictions vpon the same Texts; it is euident, that from Scripture alone, we can promise our selues little, or no security.

3. Secondly, I suppose there is a Church of Christ extant, that beareth the true markes of his promises and prouidence; renowned for antiquity and continued Succession; perspicuous for extent; knit in vnity; adorned with vnanimous Consent of Doctours throughout the world; established and maintained by Councils, beautified &

enriched with multitudes of holy men, admirable for their Conuersation and vertue; strengthened with miracles; finally in Doctrine and Custome professing piety, that any one beholding it may say, heere is the finger of God, this is the light, this the hill on the topp of hills.

4. Thirdly I suppose what truth it selfe (Marc. 16.) denounceth; *He that will not believe, shall be damned.* Whence vnder paine of Damnation we are obliged not to disbelieve any point proposed vnto vs in holy Scripture; for Christ specified not any particular article or articles, but to all disbeliefe of his Gospell he denounceth Damnation, *Going into all the world, preach the Gospell, he that will not believe &c.* Hence it followeth, that amongst different opiniōs concerning the same Scripture, that part is lesse secure, that denieth the articles proposed out of it, since for disbeliefe Damnation is denounced, not for beleife.

5. Fourthly, I suppose as consequent
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to what is said, that if an article commonly believed, be iudged hard by any priuate man, it is not secure for him to condemne it, relying only vpon human discourse, though ioined with his owne or some others interpretation of holy Scripture, for all this is but in the degree of probability, and not different from the meanes the *Arians*, and other impious heretiques vsed; consequently vn sufficient to disproue the contrary possessed believe, though it be but supposed probable: but he must produce cleere Scripture without addition, diminution, supposition, or interpretation, since these are subiect to doubt, & consequently to danger of leading into disbelieve; who doth not see how impossible this is?

6. Finally, for the end of this prudent Choyce, I suppose, as sufficient, in that religion which first belieueth many articles, denied afterwards by others, a moral probability of the sense of Christs word: and this no wise man can deny to a Church ancient, and consisting of

Councels and learned men in all parts of the world: agreeing in one opinion without any alteration evidently proved. To say that any article is improbable, because it is impossible, is to prove by a ground not possible to be proved, and to overthrow all fayth, as is manifest. We seeke not then what seemeth possible or impossible to our poore apprehensions, but what most probably Christ deliuered: and he that with probabilities only denieth what is but probably believed, is not in secure state of his saluation.

7. By these grounds cleere inough in themselves, euery Christian may easily discern what Religion is secure in practise, to wit, that which remoueth him furthest from danger of that sentence, *Who will not belieue shalbe damned.* According to this Touchstone for the better instruction of the common sort, I will examin the chiefe points now in question, that by these examples the rest may be easily examined.

What

What Choice ought a man to make concerning the Real Presence of Christs body and bloud in the Sacrament of the last Supper.

8. **T**O iustify the beliefe thereof, we haue first the words of Christ, *Ioan. 6.* where he amply promiseth his body and bloud: *My flesh is truly meate, and my blood &c. he that eateth my flesh &c.* he that will not belieue this, but vnderstand it in a different sense from his predecessors, perswaded by those obscure words, *the spirit giueth life, the flesh profiteth nothing*, exposeth him to danger of disbeliefe with the Iewes, and blasphemy, since *Vers. 56.* it is said: *he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.* And S Paul to the *Col. c. 1.* *You which were in times past strangers and enemies &c. hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to make you holy*; how then can those words, *the flesh profiteth nothing* without danger be vnderstood of the flesh of Christ as profiting nothing? is it not profit to vs
that

that Christ should dwell in vs, and we in him? that we are reconciled in the body of his flesh?

9. Secondly, the words of Christ performing: *This is my body; take and eat; do this &c.* which words if we wrest to a figurative sense, we must bring cleere Scripture for it, else our interpretation is dangerous, denying such a cleere mystery vpon human motiues. Thirdly, we haue the testimony of *S. Paul 1. Cor. 11.* If these places be obscure, we haue besides the Consent of Nations, the common voyce of the whole Christian world for a thousand five hundred yeares without Contradiction. Finally, in the beliefe and practise thereof, there is no impiety, but prayse and honour of Christ, who vpon sufficient grounds is supposed present vnder the formes of bread and wine; he is receiued with reuerence, the soule being first prepared with harty sorrow for sinnes past, accompanied with loue, thankfulnes, and liuely remembrance of his sacred Passion &c. For deniall of this beliefe we
haue

haue but small authority, not one cleere testimony of Scripture that interpreteth those words of Christ as figuratiuely spoken, all other arguments can be but probable.

10. Now I aske any indifferent mans iudgment, what he would do, in case a perfect figure of Christ should visibly appeare, commonly acknowledged and worshipped by all with sincere intention. If furthermore it were deliuered commonly, that to suspect the apparition, as an illusion of Sathan, were a wrong to Christ, will he aduenture to spit at it? will he not rather forbear that, and iudge it secure to belieue and worship with others, since therein he findeth no hurt, but inuincible motiues to do so? Cleere then it is, what we ought to resolute in this point, since for the beliefe we haue inuincible motiues; in the practise there is no danger of any impiety, as certainly there is in the denial, if we grant but probability in the beliefe.

11. Only it may be objected, that if Christ

Christ be not vnder those formes of bread and wine, there is danger of Idolatry. But this is a manifest mistake; for Belieuers adore not bread nor wine, nor any Creature, but Christ, whom vpon good grounds they suppose present sacramentally. Know therefore, that Adoration consisteth of outward reuerence ioyned with interiour, as of body and soule: the outward is indifferent to God and Creatures, the interiour ioyned with it makes the difference. Exterior reuerence applied by our intention to a temporall Lord is but a Ciuil worship: the same applied by our intention to a Saint, as a Creature of God highly in his fauour, is a higher degree of honour, yet within the limits of inferior worship. It is likewise applied by our intention to God our Creatour and Sauour, thus it is perfect adoration and due only to God. He then that belieueth Christ is conteyned sacramentally vnder the formes of bread and wine may securely adore, since his adoration proceeding from his beliefe, transferreth the

the outward act from all Creatures, & directeth it to God himselfe, euen in case in his immediate beliefe he should be mistaken; there remayneth then no dāger in the beliefe, but great danger in the deniall. *He that will not believe &c.*

What of the Masse?

12. **M**ASSE is a compleate performance of that commaund; *Do this in remembrance of me. Luc. 22.* Wherin by the Priest, prayers are said for the whole Church, the holy Scripture is read, all the parts and ceremonies thereof represent the life & passion of Christ, who by meanes of those words pronounced in his name, *Hoc est Corpus meum*, is dayly offered in sacrifice to the honour of God, & profit of his Church. Whence it cometh to passe that fayth, gratitude, and loue towards our Redeemer is daily renewed; and the knowne prophecy of *Malach. c. 1.* fulfilled: *From the rising of the Sun vnto the going downe of the same, my Name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place a pure oblation*
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is sacrificed and offered to my name, according to the most ancient and common Translation. Thus innumerable Believers constantly hold and practise, vpon sufficient grounds, without the least shew of impiety; why then, may I not securely believe I see not; nor how the denial can be free from danger, since vpon Disbelieuers only Damnation is denounced.

What of Confession & Absolution, commonly called the Sacrament of Penance.

13. **H**ere a Christian, after due examination of his Conscience with hartty sorrow and purpose of amendment (which acts are necessarily required) confesseth his sinnes, expecteth absolution by the ministry of the Priest. What danger can there be in this beliefe and practise? The Iewes charged Christ of blasphemy, laying: *Who can forgiue sinnes but God?* Against Christ they sinned, because they believed him to be man only; which error he chastised by miracle. *Matth. 9.* giuing them
withall

withall to vnderstand, that men also by power receiued from him, should forgiue sinnes; for in that they conceiued he taught, that man had power to forgiue sinnes, he checked them not, but rather confirmed it: *And that you may know* (sayth Christ) *that the Sonne of Man hath authority in earth to forgiue sinnes &c.* And the multitude glorified God who had giuen such authority to men. Moreouer Christ to his Apostles Io. c. 22. sayth: *Receiue yee the holy Ghost, whose sinns yee remit, they are remitted vnto them, and whose sinnes yee retaine they are retayned:* Likewise Matth. 18. *Whatsoeuer yee shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heauen, and whatsoeuer yee shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heauen.* Questionlesse, the prime sense of these words import a power giuen to men to forgiue sinnes: nothing then is presumptuously assumed by the Belieuers thereof; for though it is proper only to God to forgiue sinnes by his owne power and of himselfe, yet the light of nature teacheth that man may also forgiue sinnes by Cōmission from

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him;

him; as it is proper to a King only to forgive Treasons committed against his person, yet by Commission & his name a Subject may have power to do the same without iniury to the King, or exceeding the degree of a Subject. Why may not the Minister of God by authority give him forgive sinne in his name without offending or exceeding the limits of a dutifull creature? this is at the least probable. In opposition I find no Scripture, but only admirations of a few dangers in comparison of the Believers; euidēt reason there can be none. Dangerous then is the deniall, Beliefe secure. *Qui non crediderit*; Who will not believe shalbe damned.

What of one Church, and one Head thereof?

14. **I**N Common Wealths throughout the world, I find an Vnity is most sought for, and to that end one supreme gouvernour and ruler; in one house one Maister, in one Towne one Maior, in one Company one Captaine, in one Army one Generall, in one Kingdome
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one King; can it beare any colour of offence, to believe that in the most perfect Common-wealth, instituted by Christ, there is ordained one flock vnder one Pastour? *Vt fiat vnum ouile, & vnus pastor.* We see that in two supreme gouernements there is no mutuall subordination, therefore not properly one; and where there are two Kings, it is sufficient to conclude two Kingdomes. If then in Gods Church we admit diuers supreme Gouernours, we cannot so perfectly call it one Church, as one flock is one vnder one Pastor; which Christ promised should be so. Whence it seemeth manifest, that for the preserving of vnity in Gods Church one head is necessary, and that in the belief thereof there is no danger, though there were no Scripture at all to warrant it. For as temporall Kings, though they haue no warrant for their ech particular regall power out of holy Scripture, yet by law and iustice and conscience we are iustly obliged, not to question it: So I vnderstand not, with what securi-

sy a man may deny the authority of
 one supreme Gouvernour of a Church
 so many hundred of yeares prescribed.
 I need not heere heape vp texts of holy
 Scripture for prooffe of the beliefe of
 one Church vnder one head, since in the
 beliefe thereof there is no shew of im-
 piety, but in the deniall as much dan-
 ger of impiety, as in denying any Prince
 his due. Yet that it may appeare, that
 the deniers are not only in danger of in-
 iustice, but also of disbelieuing Christs
 words, I lay downe some few Texts to
 be pondered. *Matth. 6. Thou art Peter, &
 upon this rock will I build my Church, and
 the gates of Hel shall not preuaile against it.*
 Behold one rock, one Church, & that
 permanent against all assaults. *Io. 21. to
 Peter he said, feed my sheepe;* which words
 imply the full office of a Pastor, that is,
 not only to prouide nourishment, but
 also to gouerne and defend, without
 which the office of a Shepheard is not
 complete. That also these words were
 spoken only to Peter, it is manifest by
 that thrice repeated interrogation of
 Christ

Christ, saying: *Simon Peter, louest thou me?* especially when he addeth, *more then these?* wherby he excluded the rest of his Apostles; to which when *S. Peter* had answered that he loued him, Christ thereupon replied, *feed my sheepe*; as if he should say, the supreme dignity of Pastorship and Vicegerency which I giue you, requireth great loue and charity, & as you truly loue me, so be a true Pastor in my Church; & because I giue you a dignity aboue the rest whome you are to rule in my place, therefore I require that your loue to me be singular.

15. This litle I haue obserued, yeildeth such probability at the least, that it is manifest, it cannot without danger be denied, but that God his Church is one, vnder one head. But grant these places are not cleere in themselves, yet the Common voyce of the world so long continued, expressed also in the two Creeds, may iustly excuse any Belieuer from the least danger of that sentence *Who will not belieue &c.* Securely then with the Apostles Creed we cōfesse to be-

lieue the holy Catholique Church: and with the Nicen, One, holy, Catholique, and Apostolique Church: and not one, vnles it haue a supreme visible Gouvernour, to whom all are subordinate. What danger can there be in this beliefe, if feare of God & Cōscience only be regarded?

What concerning recommending our selues to the intercession of Saints.

16. **T**O iustify the beliefe and practice of this point, it is sufficient that it is conformable to reason, and void of iniury to Christ. I aske then, why may not we commend our selues to the intercession of Saints, as well as *S. Paul* did commend himselfe to the prayers of liuing Christians? If it be answered, it is an iniury to Christ, who biddeth all come to him; I see not first how *S. Paul* can be excused, that oft commended himselfe to the intercession of inferiour Creatures, who should haue gone to Christ only, and to nobody els. Looke what must be answered in excuse of *S. Paul*, the same must iustify
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our praying to Saints. Moreouer, to iustify *S. Paul*, and those that commend themselves to the intercession of Saints, it seemeth euident that both he and we go truly to Christ: for we go not to Saints to giue vs this or that, but to obtaine their mediation, for fauours at God's hand; as truly we are said to haue recourse to the King for honour, if we desire his Favourites to intercede for vs: & as notwithstanding this mediation, we are truly said not to wrōg the King, but to seeke to him; so by our intercession to Saints we wrong not Christ, but go to him; vnles a man should be conceiued not to seeke to Christ at all, but only to pray to Saints, which in no good Christian can be imagined.

17. If it be answered, that Saints in heauen cānot heare vs; I aske, how can this be knowne? not by Scripture, since it witnesseth that many Prophets saw objects not only absent, but not existent many hundred yeares after their time, only by diuine inspiration: nor by reason; for though were their hearing by

corporal eares, there might be some difficulty, yet since their hearing is vnderstanding, which is indifferent to conceiue objects, as well absent as present, this difficulty to any will appeare vaine and impertinent, since we know not, how our soule vnderstands, nor how our eyes see, or eares heare.

18. Hence I gather, that the Belieuers of this Article though they had no expresse Scripture for prooffe thereof, (which for the present I examine not) yet since their practice is conformable to reason, and consequent to the practice of *S. Paul*, and the whole Church, they may rest secure in the beliefe, vntill the deniers bring some cleere places of holy Scripture to the contrary; such places, I say, that need no explications, suppositions &c. For these being but probabilities, are not sufficient to make the Belieuers deny what before they believed, least perchance by not believing they proue guilty of damnation; from which they are doubtles free, though peraduenture the Saints heare them

them not. As for iniury to Christ, I have shewed before, there is not the least colour thereof.

What Choice may be securely made concerning the making, and worshipping the Image of Christ, and his Saints?

19. **F**Or the end of a safe resolution in this point, it is necessary first to declare, what kind of worship is pretended due to Images; and for example, I will discourse of the Image of Christ crucified, whereby what may be said of the rest with proportion, it will easily appeare.

20. The worship then pretended, neuer tendeth to the Image, out of an apprehension of any Diuinity therein contained, but only out of a faith in Christ represented by that Image, that is, believing Christ worthy of all honour, represented by this picture, in manner as he visibly once appeared. Whence eident it is first, that by such worship Christ is immediatly worshipped. Secondly, that no honour due to
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God, is transferred to a Creature. Thirdly, that whatsoever honour exterior or interior tendeth towards the Image, is not for it, nor resteth there, but by our faith and interior reuerence, is referred to Christ, for whom & to whom it is exhibited: for since perfect worship consisteth both in the exterior and interior acts conioyned, the interior giuing life, & the very being worship to the exterior, the interior respecting Christ for himselfe, and the Image only for Christ; no signe of injury to Christ can be imagined. Or in a word, the worship heere in question is only an outward honour towards the Image, proceeding from an inward reuerence to Christ himselfe. And as *S. Mary Magdalen* worshiped Christ as a man, out of beliefe of the Diuinity contained in him, or rather as some worship their Communion for the Connexion it hath with Christ, whom it representeth; so in like manner the worship giuen to Images, is for the Connexion they haue with Christ himselfe. The question cate
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then is, whether the worship thus vnderstood be lawfull or no?

21. According to the new translations of the Bible, the negative part against the Believers seemes iustified. *Exod. 20.* expressly forbidding the making and worshipping of any Image whatsoever. But the first doubt that heere occurreth, and that a maine one, is; how this latter translation can be iustified, reading, *Image*, against the ancient, *idol*, or *grauen thing*, and so interpreted by ancient Doctours, and Fathers. Secondly, grant *Image*, the right translation, how can we be sure, that the same law is now in force, more then the law of the Saboth or Circumcision? I see not how these two doubts can be solued by cleer Scripture which is necessary to repeale an anciently receiued beliefe in a Church,

22. Moreouer, admitting the word *Image*, and the Law to stand; it is manifest that place proueth nothing against the worship of Images as explicated before, but only against Idolatrous

erous abuse of them.

23. First, out of the end of the Law, which was, that the honour of God should bee inuiolably kept, by giuing diuine worship to him, and to no creature; therefore in the beginning he said; *I am thy Lord God, thou shalt haue no other Gods but me:* and after he had commanded, that no Idols, nor other likenesses of any thing should be made, he added the cause: *For I am thy Lord God, a zealous God;* that is, make not to thyself any Idol or Image for thy God, for I am thy God. Where marke, that particle *for*, which giueth a reason, why he forbids Images; because he was true God, and a zealous God: which reason must suppose such a vse of Images, as should transferre Gods honour from him to them; els that particle, *for*, is not pertinent, if due honour of Images consist with the honour due to God: that before declared doth, and I will shew more hereafter.

24. Secondly, because, if that Command haue force now, against wor-

he Law, making of Images, in so much that the
 of God very Kings coyne must be proued vn-
 y giuing lawfull : but this is palpably absurd,
 no Cre. therefore also absurd, that the Law
 ing it is shold now be of force against all Image
 lt haue no worship. The first proposition is mani-
 ad com. fest: for what the Law forbiddeth to be
 other li. worshiped, it also forbiddeth to be
 made, he made; or if it forbiddeth them not to be
 rd God; made, how doth it forbid them to be
 thy selfe worshiped? the law expressly sayth; *thou*
 for I am shalt not make to thy selfe, nor worship. If
 particle, any reply, that those first words, *thou*
 he doth shalt not make to thy selfe &c. signify *thou*
 as their shalt not make to worship, intimating that
 n reason the worship only, and not the making
 ages as of Images is forbidden; I aske him first,
 ur from how he can proue this his interpreta-
 or, is im- tion by Scripture? If he cannot, I may
 ges may not without danger receiue, or make
 God; as any Image. Secondly it is manifest that,
 d I will that interpretation can haue no ground
 in Scripture, vnles we also say, that
 when Gen. 3.4. it is said, *Adam and Eue*
 made themselues, or to themselues
 ping,

Aprons;

Aprons; and cap. 6. Make thee, or to thy selfe, an Arke: & Num. 10. Make thee, or to thy selfe, two trumpets, is to be vnderstood of worship. Thirdly, if the first part, *thou shalt not make to thy selfe,* be vnderstood, *thou shalt not make to worship* why should it be added, *and thou shalt not worship?* If then we vnderstand this place to be of force against Image worship, we must conclude it to be of force against the making, and receauing of all manner of Images, which Christ himselfe reproveth, commanding Cæsars coyne to be giuen to him. Whence it being manifest, that the second proposition is true, to wit, that this is absurd, it followeth evidently that it is also absurd to say, that the law is now in force against Image worship.

25. A third and chiefe reason is, because we haue cleere warrant out of holy Scripture, both for the making & worshiping of Images; the same Law-maker commanding Cherubims ouer the Arke *Exod. 25.* and a Serpent of brasse *Num. 21.* Cherubims, Lyons *Reg.*

4. 7. to be made; how can this stand
 with a total prohibition of Images? That
 Arke represented God not so properly
 as the Image of Christ representeth
 Christ, yet *David* teacheth vs, *Adore the*
footstool of our Lord, for he is holy: which
 he sayth not, out of any Command
 there euer was of adoring the Arke,
 since there was none; but only out of
 Consideration, that it representeth in
 some sort the Maiesty of God. *Iosua* c. 7.
fell prostrate before the Arke: where I see
 not, what he did more or lesse then is
 required in the worship of Images: did
Iosua then breake God's command? We
 read *Gen.* 8. 2. *Nu.* 22. *Ios.* 5. 14. and els
 where, how the holy Prophets adored
 God in Images, or in Angels represen-
 ting his person, prostrating themselues
 before them: and though their inten-
 tion was directed to God, yet their out-
 ward worship was directed to those
 sensible apparitions, or Images repre-
 senting God to their imaginations;
 wherein they conceiued God as repre-
 sented, and these Images representing
 God

God, morally one object; in the same manner as it hapneth in the honour of Images, and in the worship of the figurative Communion, or as all Ciuill Nations do, when they honour the *Chayre of State*, or *Presence Chamber* of a King, without wrong to Christ, or to the King.

26. These three arguments do manifestly shew, that whether in the Commandment we read *Idol*, or *Image*; by it nothing can be proued, against the declared manner of worshiping Images, vnlesse we will proue a Contradiction in holy Scripture. Moreouer since it is cleerly proued, by those examples and practice taken out of holy Scripture, that in such worship there is no signe of dishonour to God; it is doubtles more secure with the common practice of the world, to honour them, then by the deniall of it to condemne such manifest authority.

27. That in the refusing there is no security, it is also manifest, since the Scripture brought is not cleere for condemnation.

demnation of Image-worship, therefore not sufficient to cry downe an ancient practice, proued by sound Texts of Scripture, which can neuer be reconciled with thole words of the Law, vnlesse where *Image* is read, we reade *Idol*: which word signifieth a Commā that no Creature should be made, nor worshiped as God. This vse of Images declared is iustified both in respect of making and worshiping, by other texts of Scripture without any Contradiction to thole words of the Law; when the contrary without any necessity compelleth a man to deny cleere reason and Scripture.

28. It may be objected; that since Idolatry hath been begun and maintained by Images, and since men are prone to forget God, and apply themselves wholly to corporall objects, the secure way is to abandon Images, at the least in Churches. This is spoken without reason, or law; Without law, for there can be none brought, since not *Images*, but *Idols* were the beginning and mainstay-

ning of Idolatry. Images I haue proued
warratable in holy Scripture. Without
reason: for, whereas an Idol represen-
teth nothing besides it selfe, and so is
worshipped, an Image representeth a
true thing, therefore moueth a man to a
reuerence proportionable to the object
represented. Whence in reason an *Idol*
occasioneth Idolatry not representing
any further object whither our thoughts
and honour may be transferred; when
contrarywise an *Image* of a true object
necessarily draweth our minds, and re-
uerence to some thing besides it selfe:
so that aske any simple Believer, whe-
ther he pray to an Image, or put any
Confidence in it, he will say no; aske
him againe, when he is kneeling before
a picture with his eyes fixed on it, whi-
ther he directs his prayers? he will say
to Christ, or some Saint. What hurt is
there in this? *S. Mary Magdalen* pro-
strate, kissed and bathed with her teares
the feet of Christ: what iustified that
act, but the vnion which those sacred
feet had with his diuinity, which not-
with-

withstanding she saw not, but apprehended by fayth ? Though betweene Christ and his picture there be not so immediate connexion, yet a morall Connexion there is, such as betweene the King, and his Picture, Chayre of state, Embailadour &c. why then may not a Christian apprehend this connexion betweene Christ and his Image representing him, and accordingly exhibite due honour, without danger of Idolatry?

Whether is holy Scripture, the only Rule of our Faith?

29. **H**itherto I haue shewed, that supposing Scripture the only rule, beleefe is more secure, then denial; for both parties relying vpon the same Scripture, can neuer conuince ech others interpretation of falsity, as experience sufficiently sheweth, and probability at least must be supposed on both parts; in which case finding no further euidence, prudence compelleth me to choose that part which is

most remote from danger of Condemnation : *Who will not believe , shall be damned.*

30. Now, that there may remayne no doubt at all , of the secure Choice of beliefe; I will shew it consequent to reason , & holy Scripture, that we must admit of some other rule besides Scripture. If then beliefe be grounded not only vpon probable authority of Scripture (wherein it is equal at the least with authority of Deniers or Disbelieuers) but also vpon an other rule apparently knowne and scene, as it is fit for a rule to be , there can be no doubt of the security of beleeefe.

31. And first, I suppose it is more then probable , or either Physically certaine , that there hath euer beene a Church, teaching and practizing those points of beliefe aforementioned, not sufficiently disproued in point of Continuance & incorruption in Doctrine, though the gates of Heil haue breathed forth all malice against it.

32. Secondly, I suppose holy Scripture
ture

sure as inspired by the holy Ghost to be a certaine rule of Christian beliefe ; yet for that it is certaine that al is not written that was deliuered by Christ , neither doth it any where say, that it is the infallible and sole word of God , and for that it is obscure, & doth not cleerly explicate it selte, as it is manifest by experience ; it cannot be an infallible rule for the deciding of contradictory opinions drawne from the same, though it alone may be a sufficient direction to let vs know what more securely may be believed.

33. The question then is: Whether besides the Scripture , a *Church* also, as an vnpartiall Interpreter thereof, be to be admitted; which is as much to say: Whether the commo voice of a *Church* interpreting holy Scripture , be a more secure rule, then the voice of some particular men , whose priuate interpretations, as before I shewed, are not certaine proofes out of holy Scripture, but only probabilityes out of their owne iudgment : which notwithstanding ,

some will oblige all to admit as Scripture, and contemne the explication of an ancient Church.

34. For the negative part I find no cleere Scripture, but such texts as require hard interpretation, and which as much oppose the practice of the first Primitiue Church, then admitted as a doubtles rule, as it will appeare to any that shall consider them: *You shall not add a word. Deut. 4. 2. Search the Scriptures. Ioan. 5. 39. These things are written that you may believe. Io. 20. 31. All Scripture diuinely inspired is profitable.* Are not these places of as much force against the Primitiue Church? Do they & the like say, that all truth is written? or that what is written is diuine Scripture? or that it needs no helpe of interpretatiō, no not of a Church but of priuate spirits? What ground then doth there remaine for the inforcing of sole Scripture, as the only rule of our believe?

35. For the affirmatiue part, we haue first, that Article of the Apostles Creed: *I believe the holy Catholique Church:*
How

How can we believe the Church of Christ to be holy and Catholique, and doubt of Gods protection of it in point of true believe and Doctrine?

36. Secondly, the authority of the Euangelists: *Math. ult. Teach all Nations &c. Behold I am with you every day even to the consummation of the world. Math. 18. 17. If he shall not heare the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen & publicā. Luc. 10. 16. He that heareth you heareth me, and he that contemneth you contemneth me.* Besides, the Church is called, the Pillar and firmament of truth. *Tim. 3. 15. Light of the world. Math. 5. 14.* Do not these texts probably point at a living rule?

37. Thirdly, since Christ obligeth vs to a believe of his doctrine vnder paine of damnation, it is manifest that by some meanes he will make it appeare vnto vs; but by Scripture alone it doth not sufficiently appeare, for by it we know not what is Scripture, nor which is the true sense of Scripture, els all would soone agree: therefore Scripture is not sufficient alone to deliuer vnto

vs our sauing fayth. But the most vndoubted and indifferent Interpreter thereof is an vniuersall Church; so as we may securely be ruled by it; interpreting the said Scripture, and cannot be reiected without danger of disbelieuing God's word.

*Grant to disbelieuers probability of reason,
yet their danger is certaine.*

38. **S**ome may thinke, that this Discourse proueth Belieuers secure, but not that Disbelieuers are in certaine danger, if they be ruled according to the meanes and capacity God hath giuen them, and that such are not stubborn Deniers of truth, consequently secure inough. I grant, that inuincible ignorance may excuse Disbelieuers, as such, from sinne; yet it followeth not that continuall and finall disbeliefe (though inuincible) can consist with grace necessary to Salvation: but this I dispute not, nor against these, but against such as do, or may discern a difference betweene beliefe & disbeliefe;
and

and who may see that the grounds of
 believe are at least probable, & the pra-
 ctice harmeles; who finally know dam-
 nation to be denounced vpon disbelie-
 uers: notwithstanding aduventure vpon
 the denying part, moued only by the
 same reasons, which they must suppose
 in confessed Heretiques. Let any one
 define what disbelieuer may be guilty
 of damnation, he shall find thereby, that
 either he shall condemne these Disbe-
 lieuers I speake of, or els conclude that
 there neuer haue been any.

39. Some againe may say, if the believe
 be supposed only probably true, then
 the denial is also supposed probable. I
 suppose neither probability in the ne-
 gative part, nor only probability in the
 believe; but shunning this dispute as en-
 dles, only out of the vndeniable proba-
 bility for the believe, and the security
 therof, I conuince the danger of the de-
 nial.

40. But it may be replied, that at least
 the Disbelieuer by this Discourse, iud-
 ging the believe but probable, may also

iudge his owne probable, and consequently his danger also but probable, on
 I answer, that notwithstanding the Disbeliever
 belieuer thinke his opinion probable, he cannot
 cannot iudge his danger only probable, ing
 For as probability in the Believer, where
 no hurt appeares, freeth him certainly
 from danger; so the probability only, on
 which the Disbelieuer suppoeth, lea-
 ueth him in certaine danger of disbelie-
 uing what Christ hath reuealed: first,
 because his danger is certaine in the
 same degree as the beliefe is probable,
 but the beliefe is certainly probable at the
 least in respect of the great authority
 of the believers; therefore the Disbelievers
 danger is also certaine, though he
 conceiue a probability of his disbelie-
 liefe. Secondly, because the disbeliefe is
 as certainly dangerous, as it is certainly
 not euidēt (and more euidence is re-
 quired to free the disbeliefe from dan-
 ger then is necessary to free the beliefe,
 this, though it were too much, con-
 ning no hurt) but the Dis-believers do
 Arine is certainly not euidēt, therefore

is certainly dangerous. The first pro-
 position is cleere, for if there be not eui-
 dency for the disbeliefe, the contrary
 may be true, consequently obli-
 ging to beliefe. The second Proposition,
 that the Disbelieuers doctrine is not e-
 uident, appeareth by the nouelty, in-
 constancy, disagreements, and other
 circumstances incident to it; as also by
 the ouerswaying authority of the Belie-
 uers who want not any thing necessari-
 ly required to a probability at least, as
 by reflexion any one may obserue; nei-
 ther can the want of euidency, in the
 Articles denied, warrant the Disbelie-
 uers; els who could belieue? or rather
 who could be charged of heresy? Whence
 the last Consequence of the Reply is
 false, for thogh to some their disbeliefe
 may seeme probable, out of a probable
 iudgment, that Christ deliuered not
 such words, or in such a sense; yet their
 danger is certaine, because the contrary
 beliefe is certainly probable at least,
 which may conuince them, that they
 haue the secure beliefe, wherein there
 can

can be no danger, and choose that part
whereon Christ's denunciation may
fall. Nor may this argument be retorted
against Believers though their doctrine
be supposed but probable, because
their Beliefe there is containd no
harme or danger as in the disbelievers
and danger knowne breedeth an ob-
igation of further inquiry, & remoueth
all ignorance which only can excuse
error in beliefe.

41. Again it may be replied, that
this hindereth not, but that Disbeliev-
ers may conceiue their disbeliefe proba-
ble, consequently at least not imputa-
ble to sinne, and therefore free from
danger. I answer, that if a man con-
ceiue his disbeliefe probable, he hath
reason iustly to doubt, especially if his
probability arise out of apprehension
of probability in the contrary belief
which alone maketh the disbeliefe dan-
gerous in practice: as if a man should
probably thinke Baptisme not necessa-
ry for infants, he may not neglect
since in this the danger is apparent: but

case inuincibly he conceiue his opinion true, I medle not, as impertinent to this purpose, and a metaphysicall case amongst vnderstanding men.

42. If it be asked, what degree of probability Belieuers may be conceiued to haue? I answer, that as great as can be for any thing. They haue Scripture, Tradition, Consent of Nations, reason, neuer cleerely disproued as it is euident; since innumerable dayly answer all objections made against them: or let any body set downe what is sufficient to make an opinion apparently probable, that he shall cleerly finde in the doctrine of Belieuers.

43. But Disbelieuers will say, that they haue belieue in God's word, and deny only of what they find not contayned in it. This is not in question; and who will not belieue God's word? The Diuels (as *S. James* witnesseth) belieue and tremble: the question is, whether they disbelieve nothing, or by their denials put not themselves in danger of denying what is sufficiently deliuered as God's word,

word, forging or reiecting it according to the Touchstone of their fancy. Neither is it in question, whether what Almighty God hath reuealed in Scripture ought to be believed; but what God hath reuealed: and this is not only the written word, but the sense, which we receive, not perfectly from the bare letters but by the helpe of prudent rules which to reiect is dangerous, especially on their part that deny Articles probably deliuered.

44. In Conclusion of this Chapter, will answer one obiection, by many esteemed a secure *Quies est*; They say God obligeth not men to impossibilities: since then at least the vulgar sort of people cannot discern those differences, wherein learned men do disagree each one may securely rest in that religion he is taught, believing the Creed &c. This Discourse supposeth holy Scripture the only rule of belief: about the true sense whereof, since it is evident learned men do not agree, and no private man can be Iudge betweene these

disse

differences, it is manifest that who relyeth only vpon Scripture, cannot be secure that his disbeliefe is true, or that he refuse not to believe what he is commanded to believe vnder paine of damnation. To say, that euery one may securely believe according as he vnderstands, is but a desperate shift, and concludeth an impossibility of any heresie. The objection then conuinceth the necessity of a Church as a liuing rule; for God obligeth vs not to impossibilities; but it is impossible for any to discern the monstrous differences of priuate mens interpretations of Gods word: Therefore he obligeth not to the beliefe of his word vpon these priuate interpretations: But he obligeth vs to believe; therfore by some other way then by Scripture alone, he maketh it possible: this can be no other but the Church.

The

The Conclusion.

45. **T**Hus I haue sufficiently shewed the security of believers, exemplified in a few Articles most in question, contayning no harme, nor opposite to any knowne Law of God, as the better part of the Christian world euer hath witnessed, but at least most probably conformable to Christs expresse word: I see not what part of this can be doubted.

Consequently to this, I haue also shewed in what manifest danger Disbelieuers are: first by reiecting and contemning the authority of an ancient Church, & the only knowne Church when Luther began this denying belief, confessed to haue been the true Church, and as yet not conuicted of corruption in fayth, nor as much as charged by any greater authority then it selfe: Let them take heed, that be not spoken of them, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me: Who will not heare the Church let him be reputed as a Heathen and Publi-*

can. Secondly, by choosing the disbelieving part, out of seeming reasons, exposing themselves to needles dangers of that sentence: *Who will not believe &c.* For if the contrary believe must be supposed probable, as vndoubtedly it must, then the disbelieve may with probability be a deniall of Christ's word, consequently may be, it deserueth damnation; this is eident to reason, and no iudicious man can deny it.

If any feare, that as disbelieve of what Chriss deliuered maketh him a lyer, to also believe of what he deliuered not; let them but obserue the disparity betweene Belieuers & Disbelieuers; those deny what Christ deliuered as manifestly as he deliuered other truths: But Belieuers vpon the same grounds that moue them to believe of other articles, suppose the points controuerted deliuered by Christ, which if they were not deliuered they are only guilty of mistake, not of making Christ a lyer.

Who then seeth not how much it concerneth a Christian not rashly to
D deny

deny what anciently is deliuered by the Church? On true belief God's fauour dependeth, on this our eternall welfare. We expect but one death, one irrevocable iudgment, one Eternity of happynes or misery. This is promised to Disbeliefe, that to true Believers. Shall a Christian aduenture vpon seeming probabilities, and leaue security? Beliefe is secure, voyd of harme; to Disbelieuers it is said: *Who will not beliene, shall be damned.*

Let then all Disbelieuers examine their Disbeliefe, and harken to the admonition of S. *Augustin. cap. 1. de Baptis. Grauius peccat, qui in rebus ad salutem anime pertinentibus, certis incerta proponit.* Heauy is his sinne, who in matters concerning the safety of his soule, preferreth vncertaine meanes before certaine.



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FINIS.

T H E
CONVICTION
OF NOVELTIE, AND DE-
fense of antiquitie.

O R
DEMONSTRATIVE ARGVMENTS
of the falsitie of the newe Religion of England: And
trueth of the Catholike Roman faith.

DELIVERED IN TWELVE PRINCIPAL
Sylogismes, and directed to the more scholasticall wits of
the Realme of great Britanie, especially to the ingenious
students of the two most renowned Universities of Oxford
& Cambrige.

AUTHOR R. B.

Roman Catholike, and one of the English,
Clergie, and Mission.

—GRATIAS AGO DEO ME OPERIESVM CHRI-
*stum pro omnibus vobis quia fides vestra annuntiatur
in uniuerso mundo. Rom. i. 6.*

QVISQVIS ES ASSERTOR NOVORVM
Dogmatum queso te vt parcas Romanis auribus, par-
cas fidei quæ ab Apostolico ore laudata est.
S. Hier. ep. ad Pamachium & Oceanum.



CATVAPOLI,
Apud viduam MARCI WYONIS.

Anno M. DC. XXXII.